

## URBAN PESTICIDES

### GO AWAY PESTS!

**Urban pesticides** are tools to protect against the threat of pests, and can be used in **green spaces** like your backyard, public parks, golf courses or sports fields. Urban pesticides help reduce pest populations in public spaces so they can be enjoyed by all Canadians. Pesticides are often the only option for controlling these nuisances.

Pesticides include **herbicides** to manage weeds, **fungicides** to protect plants from disease, **insecticides** to control insects and **rodenticides** to protect from rodents.

Pesticides come in different formulations. **Commercial-grade** products are designed for use by people with specialized training. These include **agricultural pesticides** that help farmers safely manage pests that can damage the health and quality of crops. There are also **consumer-grade** pesticides that are diluted for the public to use.

**DYK?** You shouldn't use homemade pesticides. Health Canada strongly advises against Canadians making their own products because they have not been tested for safety.

Dandelions

**It is up to you!** Pesticide safety is about responsible use. Anyone using a pesticide, including homeowners, is required *by law* to read and understand the label instructions for proper use and application techniques.<sup>1</sup>

### Green spaces are good for us and good for the environment<sup>5</sup>

It is our responsibility to care for urban green spaces in our communities because they:



**Contribute to human well-being**, as well as happier, healthier communities by making cities more beautiful.<sup>6</sup>



**Provide food and habitat for wildlife**, and protect **biodiversity** (the wide range of life found in an ecosystem).



**Help to cycle nutrients in the environment.** Lawns, trees and other plants capture carbon from the atmosphere and produce oxygen which helps reduce pollution.<sup>7</sup>



**Cool and reduce the warming effect of the sun** on hard surfaces, such as buildings, sidewalks and roadways. They also help reduce noise pollution.<sup>8</sup>



Green spaces contribute to human well-being.

# URBAN PESTICIDES



## WHAT TYPES OF THREATS DO GREEN SPACES FACE?<sup>2</sup>



### WEEDS

If not kept under control, weeds can spread quickly and take over a lawn. Weeds like ragweed can cause allergic reactions, trigger asthma symptoms and, in some cases, result in painful rashes.<sup>5</sup>



### INSECTS

Insects can damage buildings, carry diseases that can be spread to humans and kill trees and other plants. Lawn grubs feed on grass roots and cause large sections of lawn to turn brown and die. The presence of grubs attracts predators like skunks and raccoons that pull back the grass to feed on the grubs, doing further damage. Biting insects can carry diseases like West Nile virus and Lyme disease, while stings from insects can be painful and sometimes produce serious allergic reactions.



### DISEASES

Diseases like rot, mildew, scab, blight and mold can affect not only lawns and ornamental plants but fruit and vegetable gardens as well. Air-borne spores produced by bacteria can cause allergic reactions in humans and pets.



### RODENTS

Mice and rats can damage homes and buildings, spread disease and contaminate food. Hantavirus is a potentially life-threatening disease transmitted to humans primarily by the white-footed deer mouse.<sup>4</sup>

**DYK?** Well-maintained lawns help with floodwater control. A lawn the size of 900 square metres can absorb more than 22,000 litres of water.<sup>9</sup>



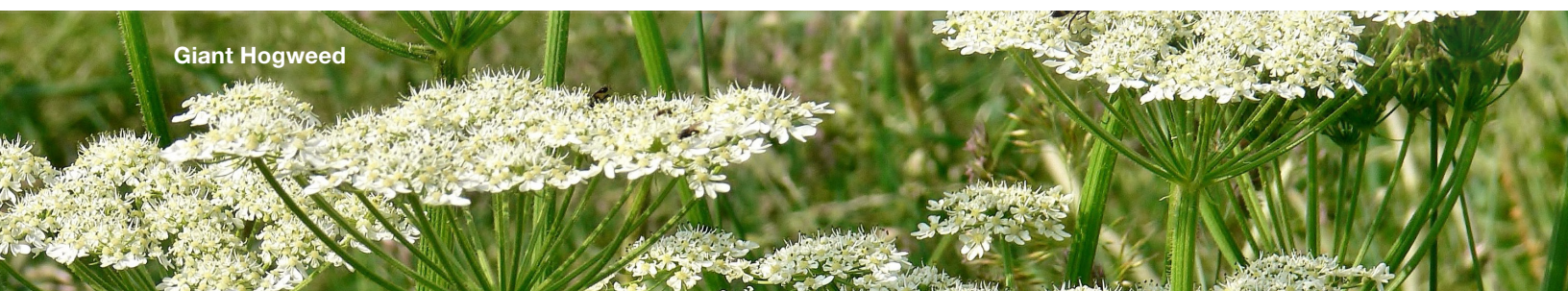
Biting insects can carry disease and cause allergic reactions.

### How do we know pesticides are safe?

Canada has one of the most stringent regulatory systems in the world for pesticides.<sup>10</sup> Under this system, Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency create the rules and safety protocols that govern the use of all pesticides (both conventional and organic) on the market today.

Provincial and territorial jurisdictions may allow cities, towns and municipalities to pass by-laws which set further conditions on the use of pesticides, such as when and where certain types of pesticides (usually lawn, turf and garden products) may be used.<sup>11</sup>

**GIANT HOGWEED** IS ONE OF CANADA'S MOST DANGEROUS PLANTS BECAUSE OF ITS TOXIC SAP THAT CAUSES SKIN RASHES AND PAINFUL BURNS. THIS WHITE-FLOWERED WEED CAN GROW UP TO SIX FEET TALL AND HAS BEEN FOUND IN GARDENS AND ALONG ROADSIDES IN QUEBEC, BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ONTARIO. HERBICIDES CAN HELP CONTROL ITS SPREAD IN URBAN AREAS.<sup>3</sup>



Giant Hogweed